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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY RAISES TRANSIT OF GAZA STUDENTS
WITH SHIN BET

Classified By: A/DCM Marc Sievers, reason 1.4 (b)(d)

11. (C) In a November 15 meeting with Yuval Diskin, head of the Shin Bet, Deputy Secretary Steinberg raised USG concern about the Israeli requirement that Palestinian students needing to exit Gaza and travel through Israel to apply for U.S. visas and/or transit to the Allenby Bridge be accompanied by U.S. diplomats. Steinberg emphasized that he was not asking that Israel allow students about whom Israel has security concerns to transit; instead, the requirement that otherwise qualified students, who had been admitted into U.S. universities, be accompanied by U.S. diplomats while transiting Israel put unrealistic personnel demands upon U.S. diplomatic operations. Diskin agreed that a compromise might be possible, whereby the Israelis would still require that Gaza students bound for U.S. universities be accompanied while transiting Israel, but that they could be grouped together and allowed to exit at one time, thus minimizing the amount of staff time required of U.S. diplomats to accompany them. Diskin asked his head of international relations, Alan Moss, to look into working out an arrangement.

12. (U) Deputy Secretary Steinberg has approved this cable.
CUNNINGHAM